

ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA

SMT. DROUPADI MURMU

ON THE OCCASION OF CALL ON BY THE MEMBERS OF 64TH NDC COURSE

Rashtrapati Bhavan, October 1, 2024

I am glad to interact with you all today. I am also delighted to see a mix of officers from Indian armed forces and civil services in this gathering. I take this opportunity to welcome the officers from friendly foreign countries.

I am told that your course includes various modules, aimed at nurturing strategic acumen and shaping you into officers with specialised knowledge in the broader domains of governance, geo-politics and national security. After listening to the enriching experiences which some of you have shared, I can say that this training has enabled you to gather a substantial understanding of various national and international issues. This will help you make informed policy decisions in your spheres of functioning.

Further, I am told that holistic and scientific methodology of learning is adopted at NDC. I am sure that apart from gaining knowledge, your personalities have also been enriched through research work, classroom discussions, insights from eminent speakers, and on-ground exposure. I am confident that this course will make an important contribution in empowering you to take on multifarious challenges arising in the arena of security related and strategic issues. This unique exposure is expected to transform you into intellectually sound and well-informed officers who would be able to take critical decisions.

Dear officers,

As you are aware, the dynamic global geo-political environment poses numerous challenges. The fast pace at which events have unfolded in the recent past, could not have been foreseen perhaps a decade earlier. Thus, all officers, whether from civil services or defence services, must be aware of the challenges and vulnerabilities they face, and the strengths that can help deal with such challenges. One strength that each of you must have and cannot do without, is being able to utilise technology for the greater good of your organisations, countries and humankind at large. Technology is advancing rapidly and it is imperative to keep pace with it. Whether it is artificial intelligence, data science, machine language processing or blockchain, you have to be aware of these technologies and should utilise them in your departments for creating a more efficient, transparent and productive work culture.

Innovation is another factor that will keep you future ready. Each nation is guided in its actions by its national interests and objectives. Sometimes, you have to face unforeseen situations and crisis. For you to be always prepared for dealing with such situations, it is necessary to be innovative, resourceful and open to collaborations. It is in this context that the utility of this course becomes more crucial.

Dear officers,

Today, our security concerns extend beyond preservation of territorial integrity and encompass other areas of national well-being such as economic, environmental, energy security, and cyber security related issues. Addressing these concerns requires intensive research, and calls for a holistic approach in dealing with these wide-ranging issues.

Here I would like to highlight the issue of cyber security. Cyber attacks have emerged as a major threat to the national security. Dealing with and countering cyber attacks requires high-end technological intervention as well as robust digital infrastructure along with a well-trained and specialised human resource. It is an issue that affects the entire governance framework of the country across all sectors. This is one of the areas where our civil services and armed forces must join hands to create a secure nationwide system capable of thwarting such attacks. Technological developments have made it mandatory for nations to set up and utilise digital infrastructure. Huge amount of data and sensitive information are also available in the governance systems which cannot be left unsecured. Therefore, I urge you all to understand the gravity of this issue and take concrete measures to address it.

Dear officers,

The role of the Armed Forces has also expanded far beyond traditional military matters. It is clear that future conflicts will require a multi-state and multi-agency approach. One of the major bottlenecks in achieving the goals is that various organisations and departments work in silos. On one hand, achieving the larger goals become difficult while on the other hand, similar jobs are performed by different departments thus creating a resource crunch. It has also been observed that officers working in the same department also keep performing overlapping tasks due to systemic gaps or lack of clear delineation of jobs. This course, therefore, makes an important contribution in preparing the officers for enhancing cooperation to perform efficiently.

Further, the close interactions with Foreign Participants during the Course would have enriched your outlook on many international issues. This course has been making possible the fostering of international relationships through alumni interactions at the highest level. I am confident that participants of the present course will build upon these relationships in future.

I once again congratulate all course participants of the 64th NDC Course and their families. I am sure you will contribute substantially towards strengthening national security and developing a robust structure for formulating holistic and strategic policies in your countries.

I wish you success in all your future endeavours. I hope that you will bring greater laurels to the National Defence College and your respective countries.

Thank you!

Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!